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ABSTRACT

In India, the use of language dialect and style, like many aspects of Indian thought and life, follows a continuum from the ritually pure and worthy of respect to the ritually defiled and unworthy. In North India, according to adult informants, Hindi is spoken at school, in formal business contacts or government offices, in formal ceremonies; it is the written language. Bhojpuri is the language spoken at home and in more informal relationships. Dialect in India is defined by attitudes, vested interests, and cognitive assumptions as to the nature of ritual, social and linguistic context, and kinesic and paralinguistic markers. Studying a child's development in the recognition and use of the language styles and dialects indicates some of the learning processes that are involved. It is possible to see various stages in the language development of children as they learn the proper usage of the styles and dialects. (VM)

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STYLE AND DIALECT SELECTION IN HINDI-BHOJPURI LEARNING CHILDREN

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In researching child language and especially child bilingualism some of the problems met with in linguistic study of adults are both redoubled, and made more obvious and inescapable. We are forced for one thing away from the comfortable notion of language as state and to a view of language as process in the developing child. We thus may incline towards the explanatory power of mentalistic models in current psycholinguistics, towards criteria of testability and psychological reality, and towards more emphasis on semantic analysis. Another problem of studying such bilingualism is that of terms definition. Are we justified in simply transferring concepts inhering in and surrounding terms such as dialect or style from the adult Western or European framework a) to children or b) to a very different social and linguistic complex as India presents? Should we perhaps re-define the semantic distinctive features for these terms to increase their discriminatory and explanatory powers in accordance with what we find in the field? And can we safely ignore the importance of paralinguistic, kinesic and other contextual features in the study of child language acquisition, particularly bilingual? These questions are here illustrated in the context of dialect-style learning by children of Banaras in North India.

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Necessarily, in order to work at all on discovery procedures in child language acquisition and in bilingualism, and to integrate our findings into a more comprehensive field of enquiry, we utilize and adapt systematic assumptions from the general discipline of linguistic research with adults and monolinguals and the resultant theory, both structural and generative. This being a much larger, better-worked and established field than the subdisciplines concentrating on language learning or bilingual processes, it is only reasonable that we should expect to bring to bear its current concepts and methods when working with bilinguals and with children, to ask questions related to current general questions of theory and method, and then to relate these matters to the field at large. However, this has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. Some methods and terminology, by the very fact of this extension of the field of research, may well need to be reconsidered and their meanings reshaped and broadened to fit the larger context. Basic orientation may also require adaptation to different language and culture systems, as their defining features and the domains based on these may segment and structure 'reality' in ways unexpected by the researcher. This again may serve to indicate needs to broaden theory; and this is, after all, the history and process of any growing discipline. However, though we are coming to expect this broad kind of adaptability in bilinguals and in young children, we as system-oriented scholars may sometimes be less ready or able to adapt our own thought and research behavior sufficiently to other systems.

In the case of children and bilinguals, and more especially in the combined case of bilingualism in young children, we are probably witnessing an extreme of adaptability. If an understanding of the range and parameters of possible communication strategies and behaviors is central to the study of linguistics, then the description and creation of explanatory models for bilingualism in young children is important indeed for the development of linguistic theory. Here we may observe linguistic manipulation and creativity concentrated, and here models of competence may well be made and tested. In fact, any powerful and general model of linguistic

competence must be able to take into account the varieties of bilingualism and developing language use in children, and of these combined, as perhaps a sort of ultimate test. Bending our energies towards fuller understanding of these phenomena may be difficult indeed, a task with so many dimensions as to be a trap for the unwary, but one with the ultimate possibility of high rewards.

In the present case of style-dialect selection, by Hindi-Bhojpuri speaking children in and near the ancient holy city of Banaras in North India, there are complexities which beggar the terminology which this writer had previously learned to use with regard to dialects, styles and related phenomena, and their analysis, as well as the whole question of what we may define as bilingualism in the adult scheme and especially in the schemes of child learners. To reap some degree of understanding out of much initial confusion required two things: considerable time spent thoroughly immersed in the situation, with close attention to what adults and children actually were saying and doing in a wide variety of contexts; and a casting aside of numerous/inadequate preconceptions. The object specifically, then, was 1) to define the operative distinctive features for adults and for children in styles or dialects, and in the contexts for which these were selected, 2) to note what and where were the markers of communicative behavior, and where their parameters, and, most difficult, 3) to come to decisions as to their basic meanings or psychological reality,[1] and 4) to group and categorize these behaviors at a higher level of broad cultural meanings and social functions.

The need to view developing child language as process rather than state seems clear enough. In North India this view of language is further underlined by the factor of rapid linguistic change,

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[1] The question always remains open and theoretically unprovable as to whether psychological reality has really been captured, and is further vexed by the question of whose reality and when, and how many psychological realities may coexist in a social group sharing a culture and language, and how much these need to and do overlap. One can be surer by observing and checking carefully with informants what solutions do <u>not</u> represent psychological reality, or the semantic set, and at least markedly narrow the possibilities.

change which for centuries has added in complex ways to—at any time—an already complex situation. Speech differences traditionally tend to demarcate the enormous variety of crosscut social and religious groupings, and emphasize other distinctions made among them. There is ritual power and bargaining power in language choices. On the one hand language is conceived as having a divine nature and power, some types having more mana than others; on the other hand individuals and groups define and can raise their social status in specific ways by making stylistic changes in their communicative behavior, provided, of course, this is done by small increments and discreetly.

Kali C. Bahl of the University of Chicago makes some pertinent comments along these sociolinguistic lines in a review of M. Jordan-Horstmann's Sadani: A Bhojpuri Dialect Spoken in Chotanagar (1969) in American Anthropologist 73:4:909-10 (August, 1971). It is noted by Bahl that the author fails to mention anywhere that "wholesale language-switching has been going on in this area[2] for quite some time....Several Sadani speaking communities are in the process of switching over to modern Hindi." Further, "language-switching... from Sadani to modern Hindi ...serves to signify sociocultural progress in this area where a particular language or dialect identifies the social status of an individual or a group in relation to other individuals or groups." The important comment is made that, "The problems of correlation between language and dialect grouping along the lines of social stratification can be fruitfully studied in North India." The additional comment might be made that definition of languages and dialects in North India is presently, and understandably, in a somewhat chaotic state.

In this land of overwhelming linguistic diversity and fourteen official state languages, an enormous amount of writing and verbal exposition continues to deal with the subject Hindi, but it must be said that few issues have been settled. Throughout, there is little agreement about how many speakers of Hindi there are, who actually speaks 'true' Hindi, how well and to whom, how much and what sorts of bilingualism and multilingualism exist, what dialects are dominant in what ways, just what the Hindi or Hindustani

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[2] the Ranchi District of Bihar

language consists of, and whether or not scores of dialects and sub-dialects are part of the Hindi language. Out of this of course rises the question as to just what is a dialect and how it is to be operationally defined. It would appear that to some extent each has been empirically and separately defined on the basis of varying criteria by people with varying qualifications to evaluate them. Especially has controversy continued as to the relative status of Hindi and Urdu, for political, communal, religious and regional reasons more than narrowly linguistic ones.

Extreme separatists in Banaras and elsewhere argue Hindi and Urdu are two distinct languages, and point for conclusive proof to their different scripts—devnagrī for Hindi stemming very closely from Sanskrit, and Persian for Urdu. Ordinary Muslims of course speak Urdu in Banaras; their Hindu neighbors speak Hindi or Bhojpuri, they say; aside from a few differences in formal greetings and prayer formulae, a linguist would be hard put indeed to detect any difference at all when they converse with each other or among themselves, in terms of phonology and grammar. It is true that there are some small differences in kinesic and paralinguistic features, and differences in dress, etc., some of which can be consciously exaggerated or pointed out if need be. There is of course some larger difference in lifestyle: in other words the differences are primarily social rather than strictly verbal, but it is not always easy to see where language fades into other aspects of culture through the communicative devices of such items as gesture and dress.

But it is interesting and informative to compare the Hindi-Urdu stylistic differences given in a standard text with actual usage in everyday speech in this holy city of the Hindus.. By far the greatest number of stylistic lexical alternates listed in the text as Urdu were those in ordinary use among both Muslims and Hindus. My informants, both Hindu adults and children over eight who were able to select and identify dialects or styles by name, contended these were by no means Urdu, but ordinary Hindi.[3] [[3] It should be noted that esteśan, motar, pensil, pen, rūl, kāpī (copybook), sāykil, rediyō, leyṭ and ṭaym, connected with the new mechanization and literacy in North India, were regarded and inflected as Hindi too.]

Many of the words listed as Hindi variants were rejected as either not known or considered bookish. Some were commonly contrasted with a lexeme from the Urdu list, but the difference given was that of respect-religious form versus ordinary. A few typical examples of the latter are:

grih	god house	ghar	ordinary house
pustak	religious book	kitāb	" book
yātrā	pilgrimage	safar	trip
śuddh	pure ritually	sāf	clean
sāhāytā	divine aid	madad	ordinary help
sthān	sacred place (e.g., tīrth-kā sthān)	jagah	place
snān	ritually purifying bath	nahān	bath (e.g., ganga snān)

This question of what is Hindi or Urdu is matched and overlapped by the question of what is Hindi or Bhojpuri, according either to adults or children. Bhojpuri is what is spoken at home, say all informants old enough to be aware of named sorts of speech. Then they add Bhojpuri is the medium of ordinary bāzār contacts, contacts with consanguineal kin, with close friends, with women and children. One also prays and sings for the gods in Bhojpuri, alone at one's pūjā or in company at a bhajan or ārthī. Bhojpuri can also be partly grammatically defined by children of eleven in that they can deliberately speak in Bhojpuri and contrast this with Hindi speech, and can give paradigmatic structure of Bhojpuri verbal inflections, etc.

Hindi is said to be that which is spoken at school, in formal business contacts or government offices, in formal ceremonies either public or private, in some contacts with affinal kin; and Hindi is what is written. One uses Hindi if possible to indicate respect given to another, and one raises the respect to be accorded to himself by his proficiency in spoken and written Hindi. Religious books are written in śuddh Hindi, a designation given a more formal, Sanskritized, and ritually pure form of the language; religious discourses, dramas, and some ceremonies are conducted in śuddh Hindi. Virtually every child over eight is aware of this style, and an increasing number of boys over this age become more or less proficient in its production as well as comprehension.

Nearly every paṇḍit, pūjārī(priest), or vyās (learned commentator on various scriptures), knows śuddh Hindi well and can expound sonorously and dramatically, quoting at times from Sanskrit, for hours. He is unlikely to use śuddh Hindi in his ordinary speech. Very many serious minded men, whether of dviya or twice born varṇa or not, know considerable śuddh Hindi.

This dimension or continuum with regard to respect or ādar in speech is commonly labeled in terms of high, ordinary, and low, or nirādar, though finer distinctions can be made if it is considered necessary in special situations. This is a measure of distinctions both linguistic and social, which transcends and complicates very much of what we are accustomed to think of in terms of dialect or style throughout India. Here these categories are inadequate to describe or explain the interrelationships in a country where some languages may be ritually high and others low, where paradoxically thetha can mean both pure and unmixed, and the unwritten language of common people. Hardly any aspect of Indian thought or life remains untouched by this contimuum of the ritually pure and worthy of respect, to the ritually defiled and unworthy—persons, groups, objects, ideas and even languages or dialects not remaining constant but rather sliding along the scale according to a multiplicity of factors, and a complex etiquette.

And all this points to the problem of how speech behavior is conceived and defined by the speakers. Factors such as attitudes, vested interests, and cognitive assumptions as to the nature of ritual, social and linguistic context clearly can effect how utterances are produced, received, interpreted and understood. On the basis of these factors plus kinesic and paralinguistic markers we can thus sometimes distinguish a 'dialect' in India. Linguistic distance is generally measured according to social and ritual distance. For example, a child of eight or more, or an adult, would quickly and positively state what dialect or style another person was using or would use, even on the basis of photographs or the mention of certain categories of persons, where both verbal and paralinguistic-kinesic features were largely ruled out. It was a matter of who ought to be speaking what to whom, a matter of established expectations. An informant's more considered decision would be based not necessarily on listening but on further knowledge of

such factors as age, sex, dress, residence, jātī, education, occupation, plus the speaker's relationship to the person spoken to, his current ritual status, and where the speech act took place: home, neighborhood, bazar, mandir (temple), school, office, etc. Even where listening was clearly possible, as in overhearing street conversations, listening for grammatical constructions or lexical items proved secondary to the social-ritual considerations, for which largely visual evidence or non-verbal information stimulated cognitive classification.

This is not to say that either children or adults were unable readily to specify styles through listening alone. They classified easily on the basis of hearing taped samples of speech of individuals unknown to them, though here I could find no way to separate cues derived from the semantic content of the taped speech from purely dialectical or stylistic differences. Before the age of three years children could easily recognize their own taped speech and that of family members, could recognize speech directed to babies by its style, and usually could pick out the śuddh Hindi style by labeling the speaker bābūjī, a cover term for any sort of holy man, often used by children as well as adults. Between three and five they became proficient in picking out Bhojpuri neighborhood-bāzār type conversations, in which they were already participating daily, and could differentiate by respect style markers speech of children and adults to individuals of higher status, outside or within the family. Also they could recognize the simplified style of an adult speaking to a young child in simple short sentences with a restricted set of lexical items and lack of respect forms. Generally they were familiar too with curt or even abusive language style, recognizing it as low, bad gālī or burā-bōlī. They identified standard Hindi with the radio broadcasts generally, as most of these Bhojpuri learning children had little or no contact with standard Hindi speakers before going to school. School attending children of six or so identified standard Hindi with school and textbooks, though their teachers admitted rather unwillingly that most instruction for the first two years was in Bhojpuri dialect, the teachers speaking Bhojpuri among themselves and at home as well. Some called the speech of the children khārībōlī or uncultivated speech, literally bitter.

By eight years school attending children were developing some proficiency within this restricted environment in standard Hindi, though they exhibited a wide range of interest and ability in this. Only a little śuddh Hindi learning takes place in the schools, and boys from this age generally learn more or less formally within the context of religious instruction from an elder family or outside preceptor, or, failing this, may pick up some informally by attendance at religious festivals or other functions where it may be heard and seen. Within one neighborhood of artisans of several jātī-s, boys from about ten to twelve varied widely from little or no ability to produce śuddh Hindi to proficiency at nearly adult level. The variable most closely associated with this seemed to be religious and ritual interests of a traditional sort, and an interest in myth and narrative in general, in other words a semantic context. In many families it is considered improper for a girl to speak anything but Bhojpuri or to attend school, at least beyond the age of nine or ten. Standard Hindi[4] and śuddh Hindi are considered the province of males, especially elders, but this does not prevent girls from being able to recognize, identify and understand these styles, and to respond to them appropriately. Within Bhojpuri it is possible for them to produce all of the main patterns along the respect continuum, and they learn much as the boys do from religious functions. At the same age as boys, girls develop the characteristic narrative style of Hindi[5], beginning with simple conjoined sentences with narrative intonation patterns at five years, and increasing the length and imbeddedness of the sentences and overall length and semantic complexity and cohesiveness of narrative to early adolescence, when they have mastered production of the adult style. A difference between speech styles of boys and girls is discernable by the age of seven or eight; each recognizes that of the other and will not use it. Here again the differences are largely paralinguistic and kinesic, with a general feature we may call emphasis[6] predominating more in the boys's style, with more vari-

[4] Within the last thirty years more girls of educated families are using the standard language of literacy.

[5] This is virtually the same for Bhojpuri as a style, allowing for the grammatical and lexical differences.

ability in intonation patterns, and a wider scope for the same general postures, gestures, etc., plus a greater overall amount of talking allowable. Boys may with impunity use some forms like slang and nicknames which most families will not allow their girls to use. Most families, again, are quite particular that their children in general conform to the standards of good, clean Bhojpuri and not use abusive language. When asked what they most liked to hear, children varied considerably in their answers; in answer to what they disliked most to hear, most replied abusive language. Some few families, it must be said, diverge from this norm.[7]

There is an important difference, currently receiving considerable attention, between linguistic competence and performance. This underlies much of relevance in bilingualism and language acquisition, of course, and as a concept possesses the virtue of testability with both bilinguals and children. Children's recognition, understanding, and classification of dialect-stylistic differences, as well as their appropriate responses to them within this Hindi-Bhojpuri system can, it is clear, be mapped out in process of development. Working out the best model to explain the children's changing distinctive feature systems and analytic strategies is more difficult, but can be approached through study of their behavioral and linguistic performance, both spontaneous and tested in various ways.

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[6] Semantic emphasis is signalled by several different means in Hindi and Bhojpuri, often conjointly used. These include:
a) vowel lengthening beyond the phonemic V̄~V contrast,
b) use of the emphatic particle /-ī/ or /hɪ̄/ which is employed in many ways and places, such as negative /na/ + /hī/ → /nahĩ/ emphatic negative,
c) reduplication of lexemes, phrases, clauses or whole sentences,
d) use of a rhymed doublet of the word requiring emphasis,
e) increasing the voice volume,
f) exaggerating the intonation patterns, and employing other paralinguistic devices, and
g) exaggerating kinesic features such as posture, expression, and gesture. Children firmly possess all these features by age three. Communication of emphasis is closely related to that of respect levels: all its forms enter to some degree in both plus and minus respect communication, the greater use being correlated with greater divergence from neutral or ordinary respect. Further, the particle /jī/ expressly denotes respect, as in ganga-jī, bāū-jī (father), hā̃-jī (yes sir), and jī-nahĩ (no sir); and pluralization is used to some extent in Hindi and more often than not in Bhojpuri to indicate respect rather than literal plurality.

It is generally agreed among Bhojpuri speakers that Bhojpuri seems most natural and comfortable, some parts of the traditional śuddh Hindi next so, the standard Hindi of necessary use third, and last of all the more formal Hindi of upper castes. It is useful perhaps to note that this is the same order in which these are acquired by Bhojpuri speaking children. Children also absorb early a basic set of important knowledge of their culture and how to behave in it; in fact, it is instructive for a researcher seeking important patterns to observe what it is that young children are learning, what they may be imitating and mastering, and what ways they express creativity within their language and culture. In studying children themselves it is also often useful to pinpoint 'mistakes' as defined by their elders' system, in that this can be a guide to developing cognitive patterns and strategies of thought, or competence within the larger system.

Bypassing the earliest stages of vocal production in cooing and babbling, and even that of global, one 'word' utterances, we note that the Bhojpuri learning child at approximately eighteen months develops pivotal utterances of two component 'words', has already mastered most intonation patterns of Bhojpuri, and has a rudimentary stock of gestures indicating negation, affirmation, and respect to gods and some elders, among other things. He also has some of the emphasis markers in his repertoire, has a stock of verb root imperatives, and generally an impressive list of kinship terms. He has learned some of the important features of family and temple pūjā. From one to about three we may say he speaks as he is spoken to in the family generally, in a style devoid of formality or respect markers, except that he is early taught to say namaste as well as perform the gesture, and will definitely add the /-jī/ honorific particle appropriately to his speech, as in the early morning greeting often extended to me by one two-year-old, namatēē, behenjī (greeting + emphasis, sister + respect). Also he may early indulge in a bit of abuse as rośanlāl at 2,6, threatening his mother's sister's small daughter: mārā, bāī (beating, brother?) apparently recognizing that behen cannot be used in such a context but bhāī, brother, can be used in a slang as well as ordinary context.

7 Also abuse language is compulsory under certain circumstances; for example, at marriages old women must come to sing insulting songs.

Before three children will be well in command of a stock of minor expletives, such as hath, (h)ē, arē, and others, used appropriately, for example, to warn off a dog or even another child. They by three have the particle /-vālā/, which may be roughly translated doer, and is neutral referring to things or persons of artisan occupations, but disrespectful for anyone else; and they use it appropriately. In general they will have the system whereby a child or adult addresses non-kin persons respectfully by kinship terms referring to elders of the appropriate generation and sex, often with the /-jī/ particle added. By three and earlier they know to address kin who are older by kinship terms only, since it is disrespectful to call anyone elder by his name. Somewhat later they learn the use of kin terms is elastic also in that one can use a term belonging to the next higher generation from the person addressed in order to convey still more respect in some cases; for example, dādā, literally father's father, for father's elder brother; or cācā, literally father's younger brother, for one's own elder brother.

In Hindi and Bhojpuri respect patterns are not equivalent to politeness formulae: there is no 'please' as such, nor are words for thanks used under any but very exceptional circumstances; expressions such as 'excuse me' are rarely used. Children usually do not learn these at an early age. They do learn to supply all relevant inflectional markers as a sign of respectful speech by the age of four, and that long, involved sentences rather than abbreviated ones are a sign of respect. A few children by three, but nearly all by four appropriately use polite /-iyē/ verbal request forms, such as baiṭhiyē (please sit), caliyē (let's go), and khaiyē (please eat); and use mat, the negative before polite request forms.

But even though isolated and increasing incidents of utterances appropriate to a definite style occur in the speech of children as young as two and three, we have little reason to suppose that they have as yet any abstract concept of two separate stylistic systems. It would be more faithful to the data and to children's capacities to judge novel contexts to suppose they have internalized bits and pieces as yet too scanty to form any coherent broad pattern on an adult style. Furthermore they combine elements of different styles in the same utterance often up to the age of about eight, and often

interestingly reduce the respect forms in sentences they choose spontaneously to imitate from older children or adults. For example, Sītā, 6,2 returned to me rather unwillingly my pen, with the /-õ̃/ particle related to the sacred syllable ōm and thereby respectful, but signifying half consent: kalamõ̃ lē lā, behenjī; then later followed with rūlõ̃ lē lāta ha.(The ruler, all right, is being brought.), which her four year old brother echoed without the /-õ̃/ as rūl le lāta ha. Or Hanumān, 6,5 included the standard Hindi /-ṭhah/ marker after his numbers, while his four year old brother immediately afterwards failed to do so; Hanumān: hamār pā̃c ṭhah fōṭō hō.(I have five photos.), and Bhāgavandās: nahī̃, ēk kar lē. (No, one bring.) Bindesvarī at five was well in command of such respectful utterances as, caliyē, behenjī-kō dikhaiyē. and dēkhaiyē.(please look.), but sometimes dispensed with them, as when it began to rain and her mother respectfully said, andar āp-lōg baiṭhiyē. (You people please be seated inside.), Bindesvarī hurriedly insisted, ghar-mẽ̃ calõ̃. (come in the house!)

By about six it appears a rudimentary sort of systematization of styles is taking place, perhaps catalyzed by school and other experiences outside the home, but still children of this age can rarely sustain production in the less familiar dialect or style for over a very few utterances at a time. Here their recognition greatly outstrips their ability to reproduce. Some children of this age can imitate teachers and even holy men in production of standard Hindi and of śuddh Hindi, but generally exhibit shyness over doing so in the presence of adults—a different situation from their bold imitation of street vendors at three. By six they could produce a haughty style of formality for semantic effect, as Hanumān's ah apnē-kō bahut calākh ha. (To the conceited one himself he is very clever.) They continue with their peers to indulge in abusive speech at times, as Pannalāl, 4,8 to Gītā, 4: aur maṭṭī khavēgē, nāk capatarā. (And you will eat dirt, flattened nose.)

Systematic instruction, of course, could produce a clear demarcation of styles or, even more clearly, languages by this age. At six, the son of the mahārāja of Banaras could publicly recite from a vast store of memorized Sanskrit śloka-s, and knew śuddh Hindi. At ten, an apprentice to his dādā, a pūjārī, could recite Sanskrit and use śuddh Hindi easily, while the eleven year old son

of a clerk and particularly pious man followed his father in conducting his own daily home pūjā in Sanskrit and śuddh Hindi, separating these clearly from the Bhojpuri he spoke at home ordinarily, and the standard Hindi he spoke at school. Another not unusual eleven year old boy could easily recite myths with almost a full command of śuddh Hindi style in all features, keep his school Hindi separate from this for the most part, and keep his home Bhojpuri entirely separate.

It would appear that, by ten or eleven certainly, these children exposed to different styles in different contexts have almost entirely separated them according to different sets of distinctive features into integral patterns, and that they are thus able to do what many adults within their same social groups have not completed. There seems to be considerable elasticity in the system itself, which allows many to overlap their styles, yet encourages some to separate them more fully. And the very closeness of these styles on a respect-level continuum makes their study interesting, and their development in children revealing, as it shows the types of confusions and the kinds of separations made during the process of learning, as well as sometimes indicating criteria and strategies used for developing systematizations.